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FAITH, REVERENCE AND FREEDOM.

A BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS,

SPOKEN SEPT. 12, 1849,

TO THE GRADUATING CLASS

IN MARSHALL COLLEGE

BY THE

PRESIDENT OF THE INSTITUTION.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN.—Your academical career is ended. A long course of study indeed, as well as a long course of action, should your lives be spared, still lies before you in the new stadium you are now called to enter, to whose claims and responsibilities we trust you may all be found faithful. But the days of your College life, forming the period of general discipline and training for all the literary professions, the most interesting part of his existence to the reminiscence of the scholar, are at length all numbered and complete. You have taken your first degree in the liberal arts, and with the solemnities of this day *commence* your proper citizenship in the great republic of letters, under sacred pledge to your *alma mater*, and this witnessing cloud of friends now present, that you will not disgrace in time to come such truly honorable distinction. In compliance with long established venerable usage, I improve the opportunity of the parting moment to which we have now come, while your feet still linger by the threshold of relations here made to cease forever, and our hand is extended in the office of its last benediction and farewell, in my own name and in the name of all your teachers here present, to speak a few words of final counsel and advice; which we beg you to carry along with you, as the legacy of our affectionate regard, into the hard and difficult world,

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on whose stepmotherly bosom you are hereafter to be cast. We cannot pretend of course, at such a time, to say all that our hearts might prompt, or the nature of the occasion suggest. We must prefer what is general to that which is particular, and even in such form we may not pretend to cover the whole field of practical wisdom and duty. Enough that we try to fix upon your thoughts a few primary and central interests of morality, that may be felt to commend themselves to regard as specially needful for the mission of life at the present time, without account of much besides that might be worthy of presentation in the some general view. Let me hold up here then to your earnest consideration three grand objects especially, to which we have endeavored to have regard in the conduct of your education thus far, and of which you are bound never to lose sight in the activity of your whole subsequent lives, *Faith, Reverence and Freedom*. Our parting counsel, at present, gathers itself up into this threefold interest. Cultivate faith in the existence of the invisible and eternal; cherish reverence for the absolute and universal; seek the true freedom of the spirit in its own sphere of necessary self-moving law. Only so can you be true to yourselves. Only so can you hope to be either truly useful or truly honorable, in your generation.

Cultivate, earnestly and constantly, the power of FAITH. Man carries in his constitution the life of two worlds. Under one aspect he belongs to the system of Nature, as it stands revealed to sense in the forms of space and time. The organism of nature completes itself in him, as its proper consummation and head. In this view, he is comprehended in its economy, and dependent perpetually upon its power. By his senses and appetites he is bound to it, through the whole course of his history, as the necessary ground and substratum of his very being. He is the child and creature of the earth, linked in close sympathy with its universal life, from the cradle to the grave. However far his nature may rise towards heaven, it is a column still which can never make its escape in full from the material basis in which it starts; it can never so effloresce into the form of spirit, as to lose all connection with the root that underlies it in the form of flesh and sense. But this is only one side of our constitution. Under another aspect, Man belongs, by original and native right, to a higher order of existence, the purely spiritual world, as it lies beyond nature altogether, and includes in itself laws and powers to which mere nature can never ascend. He is made in the image of God; which implies the light of self-knowledge and the power of free will, something wholly inde-

pendent of the world in every lower form, in virtue of which only he is qualified to be its centre and head. The life of man in this form is a new power or force brought into the bosom of nature, which can never be resolved into its previous action, and which is required accordingly to unfold and complete itself as its own product. Reason and Will spring not from the world of sense, but from a higher sphere of existence, which sense has no power of itself to apprehend or penetrate. At the same time, they are so wedded to matter and sense in our human constitution, that they cannot unfold themselves at all without this union. The case requires accordingly, not only that the spiritual principle should be autonomic, the spring and the law at once of its own action, but also that it should in this character lay hold of the material principle, the conditional basis and inseparable adjunct of its own life, in such a way that this may be converted throughout into a passive organ simply for its service and use. The harmony and perfection of our existence demand, not the destruction of nature within us, nor yet a violent divorce of the spirit from its conjugal claims, but the unity of a true marriage, in which the spirit shall be supreme and nature appear as a willing and loving handmaid by its side. This is the true conception of human life, this is the great problem of virtue and religion which every man is called to fulfil, in his particular time and place. To do so effectually, it is plain that he must stand in living earnest connection and communion with the spiritual world, from which his own spirit springs, and in virtue of whose resources only it can have either vocation or power to assert the supremacy of which we now speak. This communication with the spiritual world is accomplished by *faith*; which is simply the capacity or organ our nature carries in itself as spirit for perceiving and apprehending spiritual things, the realities of a higher world, as sense is the organ through which we stand in union with things seen and temporal. It forms emphatically thus the bond that joins us, in a real and living way, with the *pleroma* of life in God; and it is easy to see, how immeasurably needful it is that it should be always at hand as an open channel, through which fresh supplies of light and strength from that boundless fountain may be poured into our souls, to fit them for the work and conflict to which they are called.

Faith is at once a source of enlargement and strength for the human spirit, by the very posture into which this is brought by its means. Every thing is strong, in union only with the general ground of its being, and such union is necessary to make it

complete in its own separate position. So reason and will in man come to their full force, only as they are brought to fall back consciously and freely upon their own proper foundation in God. Faith serves thus to bring its possessor subjectively into the full use of his spiritual nature, under the most favorable form. To be under the power of mere sense, to be thrown upon the course of this world naturally considered as the end and whole meaning of life, is to be at the same time necessarily more or less impotent and unfree. Faith brings with it the feeling of health, the sense of order, the consciousness of strength. It is more in this respect than all opportunity and education besides; for it goes to the inmost core of our being, and makes room for it to pour forth, from the deepest fountain of its vitality, the full force of its own contents. It forms the true completion of our human state, its climax and crown, its only normal habit, in comparison with which every other condition is to be regarded as defective and out of rule. The man, in whom it reigns, verifies wherever found the magnificent simile of the first psalm. He is like the green and stately palm tree, planted by the rivers of water; "that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth, shall prosper."

This personal enlargement involves however a real participation in the life and power of the invisible world itself, towards which the soul thus erects itself by the power of faith. It is not in imagination only, but in the way of actual fact, that it passes over the limits of nature, and connects itself with the vast spiritual economy which lies beyond. Faith is the substance or hypostasis of things hoped for, the evidence or authentication of things not seen; the very ladder, we may say, that joins earth and heaven together, on which the angels of God are seen ascending and descending always as the ministers of their glorious communion. The man who believes in God, truly and really, is brought by such creed into union and communion with God himself, and enters to the same extent into the bosom of that everlasting order, whose seat is the Divine Mind, and which holds the universe in its place. He dwells in God, as the very ground of his own intelligence and will, and receives into himself, in the same proportion, the light and activity of the adorable word, the medium of all God's revelations in the world, the one single source and full comprehension at once of all truth, all law, all life. Faith in this way gives its subject a present citizenship in the skies; surrounds him with the scenery of heaven; causes him to hear in his soul the music of the spheres; brings him to bathe in the pure liquid of uncreated light; sets him in full har-

mony with the counsels of the Almighty ; draws into him, with unceasing stream, the powers of the spirit world. Is it any wonder, such vast and glorious results are attributed to it in the Bible ? How can it fail to purify the heart, and form it to every noble and generous sentiment ? Can one thus hold communion with the skies, and not be transformed gradually into the same image ? May one walk with angels, and not grow angelic in his own soul ? And how again should such faith not prove the "victory that overcometh the world ?" It is the spear of Ithuriel, whose touch at once brings all forms of Satanic mischief to their proper shape, and compels them to confess their own worthlessness and shame. It is powerful alike against the false pleasures of the world, and against its terrors and alarms ; superior at once to its frowns and to its smiles. Greatest of all, it overcomes the bad power *self*, and enables a man to bring his own life thus into harmony with its original law, without which it is not possible for him to possess true harmony or strength in any other view. The greatest of all achievements for any of you in this world, is the mastery of yourselves ; for this implies the free subordination of your natural life to the authority of the spirit, not as an isolated self, but as the universal principle of truth and order in the world ; in which view it involves, of course, at the same time, the supremacy of the spirit over the whole constitution of nature, as originally designed in man's creation. Well may it be said accordingly : "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

Faith has respect to all God's revelations. Of these the last and most perfect, is that which is presented to us by the glorious mystery of the incarnation, proclaimed in the New Testament, and always at hand in the Church. This, as it goes beyond all other revelations, completes at the same time the sense of all, and throws back upon them a depth of significance which they would not otherwise possess. We cannot have faith in God then, as he reveals himself in nature and providence, except as we have power to see and know his presence in Christ and the Church. He is the light of the world, the Sun that forms the centre of the spiritual universe, and communicates to it all its beauty and glory ; whom *not* to follow, is to "walk in darkness, without the light of life." He is the inmost reason of creation, the last sense of all God's works and ways, the Everlasting Word made Flesh. By him, we have access to the Father. Through him, the powers of the higher world are made to unite themselves, in a real and abiding way, with the wants of our fallen

life. He is the Son of Man, by whom and in whom the Divine Spirit is fully revealed in the world as the principle of the new creation, and through whom the angels of God carry forward the full correspondence of earth and heaven, (John i: 54) as symbolically seen in Jacob's vision. Have faith then in Christ. Let him be to you, in the whole mystery of the incarnation, the surest and deepest of all truths, the most necessary and near of all facts. This will bring with it a corresponding faith in the presence of God under other forms. He will be seen in Nature. He will be felt in History. The whole world will be found to be full of his glory.

Who shall utter the value and importance of such faith, in such an age especially as this, for all who are called, as you are, to take some active part in the conduct of the world's affairs. The age is full of commotion, revolution and change. Evidently we are in the midst of a vast crisis or process of transition, by which a new character is to be given hereafter to the universal state of humanity. Old things are passing away. Foundations of long standing are in many cases ready to give way. Darkness and confusion are settling on much that once seemed firm and clear. Powers of hell, not unfrequently transformed into angels of light, are on all sides actively at work. Politics, science, and religion, are all unsettled, and more or less torn with inward conflict. There is much in every direction to confound the wisdom of the wise, and to fill with apprehension the stout heart of the strong and brave. The tendencies of the age especially are in many respects powerfully adapted, to beget scepticism and doubt in regard to all that lies beyond the present world. It shows itself, to a fearful extent, materialistic, rationalistic, titanically bent on storming the heavens by its own strength. It is something high and solemn, to go forth and wrestle with the great problem of human life, in such a period of vast tumultuating strife. You may have some sense of this possibly to day; but it is no such sense as you will have of it hereafter, if earnestly true to your own mission, when you shall have fairly gone forth into this great and wide sea, and are called to grapple with its waves and billows in their own wild strength. Who can say in what midnight eclipse the stars of heaven shall not seem to go out, in all directions, over your head? Who may tell what vortices of doubt, what rocks of grim discouragement and despair, shall not present themselves in your way? One thing is certain. Outward forms, rules and traditions, as they might serve for the tolerable administration of life in more settled periods, will not answer this purpose now. Mere opinions and

notions are not sufficient to preserve the path of men at any time ; but least of all in such a time as this, when the whole moral world is agitated and convulsed with the throes of mighty revolution. To stand erect in such an age ; to be firmly faithful to the great trust of life ; to make common cause throughout with truth and virtue ; to bear up manfully against surrounding darkness, difficulty and fear ; to be of quick intelligence to discern what is right, and of resolute will to follow it in the way of constant earnest obedience ; you need above all things faith in God, in the moral order of the universe, in the divine fact of Christianity. Without Christ, the world is indeed no better than a spiritual chaos, in the midst of its greatest prosperity and glory. His presence on the other hand brings order into it, and spans it with the rainbow of hope, when it is otherwise most dismal, confused, and dark. Through all revolutions, he remains the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever. In the midst of all clouds and darkness, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. With Christ in the vessel, History can never be the sport merely of the winds and waves. The gates of hell never have prevailed, and never shall prevail, against his Church. "Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

Cultivate again the principle of REVERENCE. This rests upon faith as its necessary foundation, and is at the same time the necessary product and fruit of it, wherever it prevails. It has regard to the spiritual and invisible, and is the homage the soul pays to that which is higher and more comprehensive than itself, under its own form of existence. We reverence not nature, but spirit ; and we reveal, in doing so, the spirituality of our own being, and its native affinity with the object awakening such lofty sentiment. The animal has no reverence. It dwells not in the bosom of brutish men. On the other hand, there can be no true culture without it. Imagine a man of the highest intellectual order, gifted with all natural endowments and graced with all educational accomplishments, but still insensible to the claims of Mind and Law in their universal form, as something older and immeasurably greater than himself, and you have still at best a column only of Parian marble in human shape, the solitary grandeur of a pyramid in the midst of boundless sand. Without reverence, Gabriel himself would be poor and mean.

All reverence carries in it an acknowledgment of God, as its ultimate object and ground ; and it involves also, essentially, the

conception of God as an intelligent personal Being, and not simply in the form of an infinite abstraction. Even where this may not be clearly perceived, and the mind seems to be overwhelmed only with the sense of the absolute as a merely natural power, the true interior spring of its emotion is still always the obscure apprehension of a divine *Life* behind this, which is felt to underlie all in the character of self-existent Thought and Will. Such an emotion, even in the breast of a Spinoza, is the involuntary tribute of the human spirit to the fountain of its own life, which serves of itself to demonstrate, against all intervening speculation, its true living reality as the self-conscious ground of the universe. There can be no reverence for a universal Fate, or universal Chance; as little as it can be said to be due to a blind whirlwind or to the roaring of a forest lion. Only in the presence of the Divinity, apprehended as free, self-moving, all embracing Spirit, and only in the sense of our relation to it as the centre and end of our own being, can any such sentiment legitimately fill our minds.

But now it would be a grand mistake again, on the opposite hand, to suppose that because all reverence has regard ultimately to God, in the way here affirmed, there can be no room for its exercise towards any object less than God. This would be, in truth, to fall into the very abstraction, which the case requires, as we have already seen, that we should religiously avoid. It is not the absolute as such simply, but the absolute in the form of self-revelation, God in the world, God unfolding his glory to the view of angels and men, before which our spirits are required thus to bow. In this view, Nature itself may be the object of reverence; not on its own account, outwardly considered; but as it serves to manifest to the view of faith the sublime presence, and wonderful attributes, of Him who dwells in it, and makes it the perpetual mirror of his glory. Reverence is due to the NAME of God, wherever it comes to utterance in any way, in the stars of heaven or in the flowers of the field, in rolling seas or everlasting hills, in the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and the beasts of the forest. The universe of nature, as a whole and in all its parts, is not merely the sign of what God is, but the very symbol and sacrament of his presence, a true revelation, as far as it goes, of his "eternal power and Godhead." The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament sheweth his handiwork; day unto day uttereth speech; night unto night proclaimeth knowledge. Reason and speech enter into their very constitution; they are a vast magnificent *word*, speaking forth always the awful majesty of Jehovah. By the *word* of

the Lord in truth the heavens are, and the host of them by the *breath* of his mouth. So again, where religion has come in with new and more full revelation under a strictly supernatural form, the outward and natural may be employed still farther to embody and represent the divine and spiritual, by special inward conjunction more or less sacramental, so as to have part in its title to reverential respect. We are commanded thus to reverence God's sanctuary, his holy altar, and the solemn mysteries of his worship. In all these cases, our reverence passes at once *through* the object of sense to that which lies beyond and behind, the idea of the invisible God himself; the first is the medium only and vehicle of the sentiment, not in any sense its end. God however reveals himself in the world not merely by such outward symbols, which themselves have no part in the life of spirit, and so are shadows only of the divine substance they are made to enshrine; but still more gloriously also through the world of mind itself, in virtue of which the very image and likeness of his own nature look forth upon us from the bosom of the universe, under a created form. This is entitled to our reverence always, not only as the shine of something higher, but also for its own sake; though only for its own sake again, of course, as it is felt to be comprehended in that which is more general than itself separately considered, and so finally in the Universal Mind itself, forth from which as a parent fountain all other minds proceed. Man thus, in his single capacity, becomes an object worthy of veneration even with angels; because his personality, constituted by reason and will, sets him in real union with the very being of spirit under its universal form, and makes him to be something far more, in this view, than his own individual life as such. "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding." God did not simply make him from the dust of the ground, in the beginning, but breathed into him also a portion of his own life, and so constituted him a living soul.

As such an efflux from God, still bound through every point of its separate existence with the ocean of light and love from which it proceeds, the human spirit everywhere challenges our awful respect. We are bound to reverence it, in all men. Even an infant may claim, in such view, the inmost homage of our hearts; for it carries in its tiny life potentially the high and holy mystery of self-acting intelligence, in comparison with which the sun itself is a very small thing. It is related of Leonidas, the father of the celebrated Origen, that he would at times kiss reverentially the breast of his little son, while he lay asleep, as

though he felt the presence of the spirit that dwelt there to be higher and greater than himself. There is something beautiful and sublime in that. It carries the true and perfect stamp of Christianity. So should we all reverence our children, and treat them from the beginning as temples of the Holy Ghost. No man can have any true reverence for God, who has not yet learned, or who has forgotten, to entertain reverence for his image as it lies hid in the person of a child. Thus reverencing others, we are led to exercise the same sentiment also towards ourselves. This is something world-wide apart from pride and self-glorification. Such a habit springs from the want of faith in the true nature of spirit, leading its subject to affect a private and separate independence, which is in full violation of all truth and reason. It is only when the man recognizes in himself the presence of a life broader than his own, and finds his consciousness complete as a drop only in the sea of intelligence with which it is surrounded, that he is at once delivered from selfishness and inspired at the same time with the most profound self-respect.

This of itself implies, however, that our reverence for the single reason and will, whether in ourselves or in other men, is conditioned necessarily by a corresponding regard to reason and will in their more general form. As in the case of Nature, so too in the world of Mind, the individual existence is comprehended always in the bosom of the whole to which it belongs. God reveals himself, in the form of self-acting spirit, not by inspiring truth and law into every man separately taken; that would be as monstrous a supposition as to imagine all natural objects made separately and put together like an orrery or watch; but by a single inspiration rather, or breath of the Almighty, which is at once as broad and full as the compass of our whole Humanity. Our acknowledgement of his authority then in this form, can never be genuine and full, save as it is *mediated* by a due respect to the living organism of mind, through which alone it is brought to challenge our regard. What we are required to reverence here, as before in the constitution of the outward world, is a divine revelation, an actual self-manifestation of God's glory or name; which in this case meets us, however, in the form of created intelligence and will, and not as before in the form simply of blind nature. This system of created intelligence and will, the life of man in its general or collective character, is itself the revelation we are bound to acknowledge and respect. And do we ask now, in what way this homage is exacted at our hands? The answer is plain. Through the ethical constitution of society (itself God's work,) as it starts in

the Family, rises into the State, and completes itself at last in the glorious idea of the Church. Rightly considered, nothing can be more absurd than for men to pretend any true respect for God's will, while they show no respect for these institutions by which his will is carried over into the actual order of the world. The worst of all heresies indeed, as false to philosophy as it is to religion, is comprehended in the imagination, that reason and will are the private property simply of those to whom they belong, by means of which they are called to transact the great work of truth and righteousness directly and immediately with God himself, in an abstract and separate way. Such private judgment and private will may indeed pretend a more than usual regard for the authority of God, as not enduring the intervention of any other authority less absolute than his own; but this is only to substitute in truth an empty thought for a divine reality. God's truth and God's will come not to men, not even through the Bible itself, in any such abstract and naked style; ¹ and so to be the object at all of reverence or faith, they must be apprehended as a real revelation, under the form of life and spirit in the actual structure of the human world. No child can reverence God a whit farther than it is imbued with reverence for its parents. To despise authority, to speak evil of dignities, to be given to revolution and change, is the mark universally of an irreligious and profane mind. Radicalism and Red Republicanism, however loudly they may prate of religion,

¹ Inspiration itself forms no exception to this rule. Plainly the supernatural vision of the prophets is conditioned always by the character of their natural life, which holds of course in organic connection with the reigning religious life of their age. To conceive of the psalms of David or the oracles of Isaiah flowing from the lips of a child, would be an offence against true faith, the same in kind, though not in degree, with the imagination of their having proceeded from Balaam's ass. So the inspiration of David or Isaiah cannot be *rationaly* imagined competent, in any way, to reveal what comes to light under wholly new circumstances, in the mind of Paul. The inspiration of Paul again is not the inspiration of Peter or James or John; and *could not be so* without magic. Any theory of inspiration which implies the contrary is false, and dishonorable to religion. Inspired prophets, (in this respect like uninspired poets, only in far higher view,) moved supernaturally by the Holy Ghost, are notwithstanding, and indeed for this very reason, the birth and product of their own time, the central organs of their generation, in which the inmost meaning of its life comes to apprehension and utterance. Their oracles are no abstractions, Delphic riddles, wizard vaticinations. They are not of any *private* interpretation, (2 Peter i : 20,) but belong to the true universal life of the world. They come medially *through* the organization of the religious life, as an existing whole at the time, and not by any means as abrupt meteors shot from the clouds.

reason and right, are as irreverent towards God as they show themselves always in the end selfish and cruel also towards men. In the Church too, the same spirit is ever distinguished by the same bad character. It is the very mother of schisms and sects, ill favored, hard and harsh, from whose presence every sweet charity of the true christian life shrinks affrighted away. Reverence for the Church is the necessary condition, all the world over, of reverence for God and reverence for Christ.

The revelation of God however, under the form now in view, is not something at once finished and complete from the beginning. On the contrary it is accomplished in the way of history. In this respect, the world of mind differs from the world of mere nature. This last has no history, in the true sense of the term, except as we may choose to conceive of a vast cosmogony going before its present state, and making room for it in the way affirmed by geologists. Humanity, on the other hand, is plainly a process, by which one generation is required continually to carry forward the sense of another. History becomes thus, in a deep sense, nothing less than a divine *anthropogony*, by which the universal life of man, in the form of reason and will is moving forward always to its grand completion. It becomes plain at once, in this way, what sort of homage and respect it is entitled to claim at our hands. Shall we own God's presence in Nature, and take it by faith for the sure guaranty of order, reason and law, even in the whirlwind and earthquake; and shall we then turn round, and say of *History*, the revelation of Spirit, in which that other revelation finds its whole sense and end: It is chaos without form and void, or a sea of chance whose waves roar eternally the same hollow sound? Shall there be a divine teleology in the universe of matter, and neither end nor plan in the universe of mind? Must we see God in the stars, must we hear him in the storm and in the breeze, must we converse with him through the flowers of the field, and yet have no power to perceive his stately goings in the far more awful sanctuary of the human spirit, carried forward by successive generations towards its proper consummation? There is blasphemy in the very thought. History is no chaos. Earth has not been thus forsaken of Heaven, in the highest sphere of her life. We may find much here to bewilder and confound our thoughts, deep places of providence that we have no power to fathom or comprehend, Gordian knots that all our ingenuity and wisdom are employed in vain to solve; but still notwithstanding all this, we are bound to believe that history, as a whole, is divinely rational, and that it embodies in itself under such view the power of a moral authority,

which reason and piety alike require all men to respect. It is not possible to have any sense of the organic constitution of the world, by which the general reason and will become the medium of divine revelation for individual men, without being made to feel to the same extent the intimate and necessary connection of this general life with itself in the flow of time; for every generation grows forth plainly from that which goes before, and must be regarded as the product and result accordingly of all previous history. We cannot reverence the present truly, in any of its institutions, except as we reverence also the past. The individualism, which affects to place private judgment and private will over all authority of a general kind, is characterised always by a corresponding contempt for the world which has come to be in its rear. Radicalism and Sectarianism are by their very constitution unhistorical. They will have it that reason and law start with themselves, as a direct gift from the Almighty; and to make room for this proud pretension, they turn the whole past life of the world profanely into a moral nullity, or it may be into something much worse. Not to have faith in history however, and not to reverence it as a true revelation of God's mind and will is simply to be without true faith and reverence towards God himself. An undevout astronomer, it has been said, is mad, can he be less so, who is not led to bow in reverence before the Infinite Mind at work in History, but sees in it rather the very opposite only of intelligence and order?

Cultivate, finally, the life and power of true FREEDOM. Man is formed to be free. It lies in the very conception of intelligence, that it should be a law to itself, and not obey blindly and mechanically a power foreign to its own nature. Self-consciousness, the image of God in man, completes itself in self-activity. Truth becomes fully actual in the world, only where it passes into the form of freedom; which may be said for this reason, to constitute the crown and glory of the whole creation. No wonder, that such an interest should be held universally in high account, where any sense is had, though it be never so darkly, of the original and proper dignity of our nature. All slavery is an ignominious wrong, which the human spirit can never patiently and quietly endure, without degradation. It is the duty of all men, as well as their divine prerogative, to be free.

Few however have any right conception of freedom. It is taken, for the most part, to consist in the mere outward liberty, by which men are allowed to use their lives according to their own will, without restraint or coercion from abroad; or what is but little better, in that simply civil or political liberty, which

stands in the assertion of what are conceived to be the original and inalienable rights of men, under some abstract scheme of law. None but actual madmen are so foolish indeed as to disown all limitation, in the case of their private mind and will. Society could not exist, even under the rudest form, without law; and law implies objective restraint. But the conception now noticed severs the will from the law; makes them to stand altogether out of each other; and so places the value of liberty still, at last, in the supposed independence wholly of the first separately considered. According to the most gross form of this theory, men relinquish in society certain privileges and rights, which belong to them as individuals, in order the more effectually to secure those that are still reserved. By a more refined view, the law demanding such surrendry is regarded as a divine constitution, which men are bound to accept as the necessary condition of their social existence; in which case accordingly it is incumbent on the will in the exercise of its independence, to consent to the limitation as wholesome and good, while it expatiates then all the more freely within these bounds as its own lord and master. The two views come in the end to very much the same result. The will has its being in both cases on the outside of the law; the relation between the two is a sort of mercantile contract; obedience resolves itself into mere prudential calculation and policy. In all this we have no freedom, but spiritual mechanism and bondage. Such is the result, however, into which the fiction of abstract rights and private judgment must ever run, when left to its own course.

In full opposition to every fiction of this sort, the true idea of freedom meets us, only where rights cease to be abstract and merge themselves in the sense of society as a living whole, only where judgment and will lay aside their merely private character and show themselves as universal as the law itself. Liberty is an ethical fact, which stands just in this that the single will, in virtue of that divine autonomy or self-motion which belongs to it by its creation, flows over the boundaries of the individual life in which it has its rise, and makes itself one with the pure ether of truth that surrounds it, the glorious sea of light in which it is carried and borne. In other words, authority, law, truth as something objective and universal, is just as much a constituent of true freedom, as the single will by which in any case it is brought to pass. Will in no union with law, will sundered from the idea of authority and objective necessity, will in this way purely private and not general, can never be free. The one conception is the precise opposite of the other. And yet we

hear, on all sides, authority opposed to freedom, as though the one must necessarily exclude the other! Never was there a greater mistake, or one more practically mischievous. Not only are the two necessarily conjoined in an outward way, so that where the law ends liberty must end at the same time, and in the sense of Voltaire's maxim, if there were no God it would still be necessary to invent one to keep the world in order; they flow together inwardly also in every free act, and in such union form but the power of a single indissoluble fact. The law is not simply the measure of liberty, but its very substance and soul. So far is it from being true that authority and independence oppose each other, the last has its very being only in the sense of the first. To reverence authority is to be free. To despise it, is to have the mind and heart of a slave.

It has not been without reason then, that Faith and Reverence have been made to go before Freedom, in the present address. They form in truth its original foundation, and necessary condition, and constant element. All true authority springs from God. To believe in God, is to have the sense of authority, to be embosomed in the consciousness of law. And this consciousness, as we have now seen, constitutes the very substance of freedom. Faith inspires reverence; this is the necessary posture and habit of the will, where such apprehension of the infinite prevails; and the result of all is inward emancipation from the power of what is simply single and finite, whether as in the mind itself or out of it, and willing motion in the orbit of law; such a marriage of the single and universal, in other words, as brings them to be one. This is freedom; while all that falls short of it, is for the spiritual nature of man inglorious servitude and bondage. No man can be free, without reverence. No man can be free, without faith. Atheism, profanity and pride, are always unfree, cowardly and mean. The fear of the Lord, is the beginning of wisdom, the fountain and support of all strength in man, whether it be as light in his understanding or as active force in his will. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear," says one who was himself full of this divine heroism, "but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

The authority which freedom respects and obeys is of course always the will of God. All law, as well as all life, comes from this source alone. It must be well borne in mind however that we have to do with this, not as an abstraction brought nigh to us immediately in the way of mere thought, but as an actual self-manifestation of God's will in the living world of which we are a part. To believe in God, is as we have seen to discern and

apprehend his presence and glory in Nature, in History, in the Bible, and above all in Christ; not to dream of him simply as an unrevealed essence beyond the clouds, which can only be to sport the semblance of faith with what is at last but the creature of our own brain. So also, we have seen, reverence towards God is the profound homage of the created spirit, rendered to him, not as the incomprehensible *Sige* or *Bythos* simply of the Gnostics, but as the omnipresent indwelling Life of the Universe, whose mind and will are perpetually announcing themselves in a real way, as the very word or voice of Jehovah, first in the constitution of Nature, and then far more gloriously still in the constitution of Spirit, both wedded into a single life in the constitution of Man. The order of the world is concrete. The law of creation is in it, not beyond it, either as physical or as moral. Men can never obey it as an abstraction. It is then a grand Satanic delusion, when any pretend to be free by casting off all other forms of authority, to obey simply and exclusively, as they say, the authority of God under any such imaginary purely naked form. God's will touches no man in that way, either through the Bible or on the outside of it. It comes to every man in its full force at last, only through the medium of the actually living world, especially the living christian world, the Church; which for this very reason is proclaimed "the ground and pillar of the truth," the Body of Christ, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." No man's reason or will is to be trusted who sets out with the assumption that he is the organ, directly and separately, of the Divine Mind, and in this view responsible to God only for his opinions and ways. Rather such assumption marks universally the want of true independence and freedom, as well as the very contrary of all genuine reverence and faith. It is the slang of infidelity itself, and low, coarse, selfish radicalism, in all its forms, thus to make everything of God and *self*, and nothing of all the world besides. The manly independence of a truly free mind, springs always from the apprehension of God's presence and authority, as something concretely revealed in the actual life of the world, and from this apprehension only. The law which it is urged willingly to obey, as a power more vast than itself, is felt to surround it as an awful spiritual Reality in the the constitution of the universe. There is an homage which true Freedom exercises, under this form, in the presence even of Nature. The man is not free, whose soul is moved to no reverence, no loving though awful sense of dependence, by the sea, by the stars, by the voice of God in the whirlwind and storm. But it is in the presence of Spirit far

more under its own form, created mind, the intellectual and moral world, as not only the symbolic shadow or mirror but the very image and substance of the Divine Mind itself, that such homage finds its full value and sense. Freedom, in proportion as it is free, bows down reverentially, and is never so great and strong and glorious as when its obeisance is most complete, to all lawful authority, whether it be political, moral or religious. The obedience of a little child to the will of a father, or the command of a mother, involving such reverence and faith, is something more beautifully grand than the course of a planet round the sun. Such a child too is at once a more glorious spectacle of freedom and strength, than a whole army of Titans piling Ossa upon Pelion to take the heavens by storm.

I pity the man, who supposes that Freedom can begin, only where Authority ends. There may be indeed a slavish and abject sense of power, that brings with it only degradation and weakness. So in regard to Nature. It is the sign of an unfree mind to bestow upon it superstitious worship, or to cower tremblingly at its feet. But what then? Is the fool free, on the other hand, who can bring himself to mock and brave its terrors, or who can gaze upon its glories with the apathy of an ox? No! Even in this relation, freedom supposes and requires, not an abstract separation of the subjective from the objective, but the free loving acknowledgment rather of this last on the part of the first, as the measure and mirror of truth under its own outward form. When God rides upon the wings of the wind, or utters his voice in the majesty of the rolling thunder, true superiority to nature consists not in overlooking the awful fact, but in meeting it promptly with the reverence of an awe-struck spirit. And why then may not the same relation between the subjective and the objective, liberty and authority, extend itself also in all its force over into the moral world? It is indeed something base to crouch to authority here, in a merely outward way; just as all *fetichism* is base, when directed towards nature. But we ask again, what then? Is the remedy for such baseness, to be found in deriding and casting off all such authority, in the exercise of mere wanton self-will? Can it be less fool-hardy to despise parental government, civil government, church government, than it is to mock the lightning or brave the lion in his den? Am I bound to reverence God, and feel his law, in the constitution of the planets; and am I *not* bound to reverence him also, and feel his law, in the far more glorious constitution of Human Society and History? The question surely answers itself.

Strange that those who take Freedom to be the simple oppo-



site of Authority, should not reflect that this must hold, if it be true, in regard to the highest form of authority, that which it carries in the Divine Mind itself, as well as in all inferior relations.¹ What is gained for the independence of the subject, by merely transferring the authority he is called to obey, from created will up to that which is uncreated and eternal, if the one is to remain at last wholly out of the other, each bound forever to its own sphere? It should be remembered, that there may be a craven spirit of submission towards God himself, as well as towards mere nature or mere human power. Indeed all submission is so, in which the will of the creature is not brought to enter into the will of the Creator as its own free life. But now if Freedom and Authority do not exclude each other in this highest relation, but on the contrary are required to flow together in this inward way, why should it be imagined that they are incompatible in any lower relation, legitimately belonging to the moral world? Why may not the man who disowns private judgment and private will, be just as free in the reverent use of established law and tradition, to say the least, as the man who scorns every such limitation; limiting himself in fact at the same time in order to be thus privately and narrowly free? Why should the traveller, who has learned to respect the universal civilized world, be less truly independent than the rude shepherd or farmer, to whom his native valley still stands for the measure of the earth entire? Why should the scholar at home in the broad empire of science, not be full as great when he bends to its vast objective laws, as the self-willed sciolist or pedant who sets them all at defiance? Why should the man who honors the Past, with large knowledge of its life, and bows down before History as a divine revelation, be less prepared to think and act safely, or less likely to be onesided and bound in his views, than his hard-minded neighbor, who tries all ages by his own century, and finds no sense or meaning in any, beyond this most unhistorical

¹ It is always a false and injurious conception of God's will, when it is thought of as arbitrary, and so as outward and foreign altogether, in its relation to men. God is not out of the world and beyond it, however truly different from it in his nature, but enters into its actual order as the ground and support continually of all its laws and powers. In the moral world accordingly he does not *make* reason and right, as something on the outside of himself, which created intelligences are then required to acknowledge out of regard simply to his absolute authority; but he is both reason and right under their most universal form; they subsist, wherever found, only in and by the living activity of his intelligence and will. Men are rational and free in God. His Personality is the absolute ground of all personality besides.

rule? Why should one who believes that Christ has been always present in the course of Christianity, according to his own promise, from the beginning, and who counts it a duty accordingly to study with reverent homage the footsteps of his majesty and grace through all ages, be less qualified to reach the true mind of Christ in the Bible; than another, whose extreme individualism makes light of the Creed, looks down upon the Fathers, sees chaos only in the Middle Ages, and finds universal Christianity thus at last reflected through the Bible, from the small and insignificant *Mantua* of his own untravelled mind? Or yet once more, why should faith in the Holy Catholic Church, and reverence and sympathy for her voice, be held to be a less genial and friendly element for the growth of that true christian liberty, wherewith the Son of God makes men free, than is the atmosphere of a Sect, with which all such reverence and sympathy are wanting, and for which its own brief and narrow tradition is of more weight than the "*ubique, semper et ab omnibus*," of whole Christendom besides?

Cultivate then, we say again, Faith, Reverence, and Freedom. Remember that to be truly free, you must be superior to yourselves, as well as to the surrounding world; and this you never can be, except as you stand in felt living communion with the spiritual world, and are made to do homage thus to truth and law as something vastly greater and more glorious than your own individual lives. This is the true perfection of your nature. This is your first vocation and mission in the world. This is the magnificent work, more high and glorious than all the labors of Hercules, which you are sent forth upon the arena of life to accomplish, and which the whole creation of God, surrounding you like a mighty amphitheatre on all sides, may be said to require and expect at your hands. Your whole education, in its last sense and purpose, centres here. In vain have you made yourselves familiar with science, or secured the accomplishments of art, if along with all you are not assisted to understand and govern yourselves. Your knowledge and art may serve indeed, without this, to make you important and give you power within certain limits. But, alas, what are all advantages which can be thus secured, even under the most favorable circumstances, for the man who carries still in his own bosom the spirit of a slave? What are wealth, and station, and credit, and power, in such case, but fetters and chains, by which the soul is only so much

¹ *Urbem, quam dicunt Romam, Melibœe, putavi
Stultus ego huic nostræ similem.*

the more enslaved to the authority of a strange and tyrant law? On the other hand, let this inward liberty prevail, and its fruit is found to be universal freedom and universal strength. It can make even poverty to be rich, and adversity serenely strong; while it throws a new worth round every form of prosperity, and spreads a new charm over all that life may have of beauty or glory besides. Such freedom is in truth a victory at the same time over the world. The man who is truly master of himself, not in the way of Stoic apathy and pride, but by inward union with the Divine Law, can never be the slave of men. He is prepared, to the same extent, to brave all tyrannical authority, whether it spring from the many or the few, whether it be exercised by single handed pope or hydra headed mob. Let it be *your* ambition, and aim and endeavor, to be thus free. God has not called you, and we have not trained you, to the spirit of bondage and fear.

With these counsels, and the prayer that you may be able to quit yourselves like men in the great battle of life, we now bid you an affectionate and solemn *Farewell*.